

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Document version interoperability is provided by allowing members of a community to maintain independent migration by permitting the members to continue to run native application software on their respective systems. A community may define a community version by establishing certain rules for documents. When electronically transmitting a document, a member of the community may provide in the transmitted message containing the document his native version of the document, the community version of the document, as well as any or all versions of the document which are closer to the community version of the document than his native version of the document. This may be accomplished by performing document transformations when creating the message. Upon receipt of the documents, the recipient may choose the document version contained in the message that is most easily read by the recipient's native application program and transform it so that it may be opened by the recipient's native application program if necessary. Regardless of what rules are established to define the community version, data loss in any document exchange is minimized. Entities that follow these rules can migrate their native support without requiring coordination with other entities. Members do not have to know the native version supported by other members. This ensures privacy for the members and also lessens the need for direct communications between the members.